

Stroke: Prevention and Recognition

By Carol Waggoner, RN Health Promotion Program

Stroke is the #4 cause of death and a leading cause of long-term disability among adults in the United States. Stroke occurs when a blood vessel which brings oxygen to the brain becomes blocked or ruptures. When this happens, brain cells die within minutes due to lack of oxygen. The long term effects of stroke may be permanent, depending on how many cells are lost, where they are in the brain and other factors.

It is important to recognize and respond to the warning signs of stroke and call 911 immediately so that medication can be administered to limit the damage of the stroke.

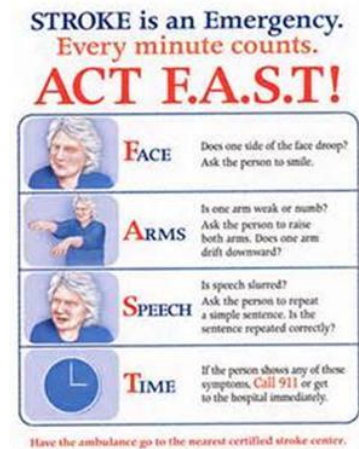
Warning signs include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Minor strokes or TIA (transient ischemic attacks) may also occur when a blood clot blocks an artery only for a short amount of time. With a TIA, the symptoms last only a few minutes. However, a TIA should not be ignored. Call 911 or seek medical assistance immediately in the event of a TIA.

According to the American Heart Association, many strokes can be prevented living a healthy lifestyle. Lifestyle factors which can prevent stroke include controlling high blood pressure, not smoking, eating a low-fat, low cholesterol diet, maintaining a healthy body weight, being physically active, and limiting alcohol intake.

For more information on strokes call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-478-7653 or go to the website www.StrokeAssociation.org



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